

Inspection of Farndon Primary School

Churton Road, Farndon, Chester, Cheshire CH3 6QP

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. Staff greet pupils warmly each morning as they come through the school gate. This helps to form trusting relationships with parents and carers and pupils. This makes pupils feel safe.

Pupils behave well around the school. Classrooms are calm and productive. Staff quickly address any occasional low-level disruptive behaviour. Pupils are polite to everyone and greet visitors with a warm welcome. In lessons, pupils work with enthusiasm. They appreciate that the staff will help them if they need support.

Recent changes to the curriculum, and the school's raised expectations of pupils' academic success, mean that current pupils are achieving better than they did in the past.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through a range of extra-curricular clubs, including dodgeball. Pupils enjoy helping others through fundraising opportunities, such as cake bakes for local cancer charities.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, the school has reviewed the curriculum. In most subjects, it has identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn and when this subject content should be taught. A few subjects are still in development. In these subjects, the school has not finalised the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn.

In most subjects, teachers deliver the school's curriculum as intended. They present new learning clearly. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions swiftly. They mostly use the school's assessment systems well to establish what pupils have learned and remembered. However, weaknesses in the previous curriculum mean that some pupils have gaps in their learning. These prevent some pupils from gaining a secure foundation on which to build when new learning is introduced. This slows their progress through the new, more ambitious curriculums.

These recent improvements have made a positive difference to the achievement of those pupils currently at the school. This is particularly true in mathematics. In 2024, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the national test was significantly below average. This was due to weaknesses in the previous approach to teaching mathematics. The school has acted quickly to address this issue. A new mathematics curriculum is helping pupils to catch up and gain a secure understanding of this subject.

Pupils enjoy listening to stories and selecting books from the library. Children in the early years make a strong start in learning to read. Expert staff deliver the phonics programme well. Pupils practise reading regularly with books that contain the sounds that they know. Staff check pupils' reading knowledge carefully. They ensure that pupils who fall behind in the phonics programme are supported to catch up quickly. By the end of Year 2, most pupils learn to read fluently and accurately.

The school has suitable systems in place to identify and assess the additional needs of pupils with SEND. It works closely with families and other professionals to ensure that these pupils have the help and support that they need. Teachers adapt lesson activities skilfully so that all pupils can learn the curriculum alongside their peers.

The school has made improvements to pupils' attendance and reduced persistent absence. It has ensured that pupils and their families understand the importance of school attendance. The school supports pupils and their families who struggle to attend school on time every day, when attendance becomes an issue.

Pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values. For instance, they learn about democracy through their own general election. Children in early years learn the importance of helping others. They are quick to lend a hand at tidy-up time and to share equipment with their friends. Pupils know the importance of looking after their physical and mental health. Younger pupils understand the importance of handwashing and eating healthy foods. Older pupils learn about what makes a healthy relationship. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Governors are committed to the school and understand the importance of their role. However, they do not hold a full and accurate picture of pupils' achievement. This limits their ability to provide the right challenge and support. Staff speak positively of the efforts made by the governing body and the school to support them. They feel that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being when making decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum. This makes it difficult for them to build new learning on what they already know. For some pupils, their progress is hindered through the new curriculums. The school should ensure that the gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and addressed, so that they can know and remember more over time.
- Governance is not fully informed by an incisive understanding of pupils' academic outcomes. This limits the rigour with which leaders can be held to account. The governing body should ensure that they gain a greater insight into the impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	111107
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10377932
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Rudd
Headteacher	Andrew Walker
Website	www.farndon.cheshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers before- and after-school care, overseen by the governing body.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers, support staff, pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For deep dives, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils to learn their views about the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Lee Comber, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jeanette Westhead	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Blay	Ofsted Inspector

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